

PUBLIC WORKS

Pipeline



Falling Leaves Ahead

Each season brings a different aspect of yard waste removal. In the fall, the City reminds residents of the proper ways to collect and remove leaves from their yards.

Leaves can be composted or disposed of through your garbage hauler. Residents who have made arrangements with a licensed hauler are required to use paper bags or containers clearly marked as "compostable."

"Since January 2010, State law has required that yard waste be placed in compostable bags," said Recycling Coordinator Solvei Wilmot. "Residents should check with their refuse hauler to make sure that they are signed up for yard waste removal, which is separate from recycling and garbage services."

It's also important to keep streets and gutters clear of leaves. Keeping leaves from entering the storm drains will help reduce the amount of phosphorus that makes algae and other plants grow in lakes and streams.

Residents are also encouraged to inspect gutters and storm drains in front of their properties and remove any debris that appears to be blocking passage to storm sewers.

"When leaves and grass clippings get into the storm drain, they end up directly in our lakes, creeks and wetlands. As they break down and decompose, they release nutrients that algae and

other aquatic plants can use to grow," explained Water Resources Coordinator Jessica Van Der Werff. "Keeping the storm drains and street gutters clean in your neighborhood can make a big difference."

In addition to keeping leaves away from storm drains, residents can further protect Minnesota waterways by stenciling storm drains in their neighborhood. To participate in this program, a stenciling kit can be reserved through the City's Engineering Department. The stencils on the drains notify nearby residents, "Keep it Clean, Drains to Creek." To reserve a kit, contact Van Der Werff at 952-826-0445 or jvanderwerff@EdinaMN.gov.

The City will not remove or pick up compost, tree branches, leaves or other yard waste collected from residents' properties. The City does not have a drop-off location for yard waste. If residents choose to hire a private lawn service to remove yard debris, contractors should be advised of City ordinances to not dispose of residential waste into City streets or gutters.

For more information on yard waste, contact Wilmot at 952-826-0463 or swilmot@EdinaMN.gov.

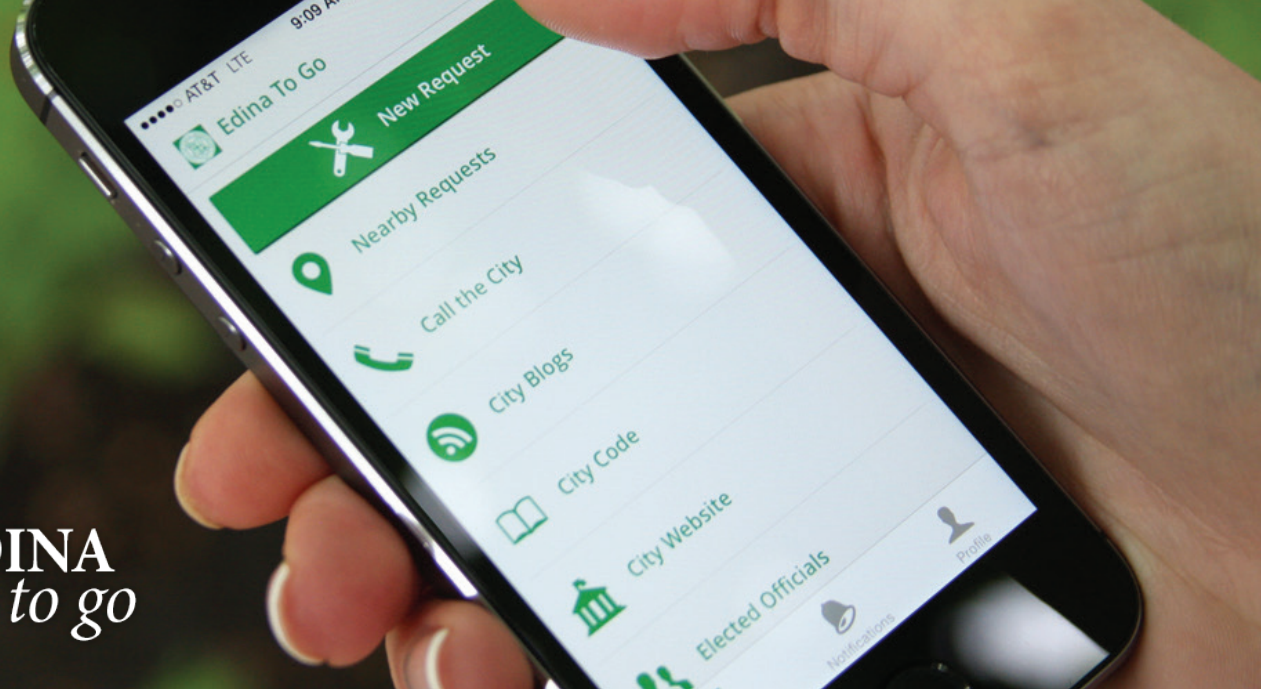
— Compiled by Krystal Caron

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EDINA
to go



City Goes Mobile With ‘Edina To Go’

Potholes, graffiti, damaged fire hydrants, darkened streetlights – these are just a few issues the City’s Public Works crews face daily. Now, with the City’s mobile app, residents can help City staff make fixes to public infrastructure with only a few taps.

In 2014, the City of Edina launched a mobile app, “Edina To Go.” The free app gives residents the power to report problems with the City’s infrastructure. It also gives quick, easy access to City information, such as phone numbers and City news.

“This transforms the way residents can interact with the City,” said Communications Coordinator Jordan Gilgenbach. “More and more people are using their mobile devices for everyday things, like working and paying bills. Now, interacting with your local government is no different.”

To develop Edina To Go, the City partnered with PublicStuff, a company that specializes in mobile apps and service requests for municipalities.

“PublicStuff is committed to improving government-citizen relations,” said Gayatri Mohan of PublicStuff. “Edina To Go helps achieve this by opening up real-time, two-way communication between the City and its community.”

In the past, reporting an issue to the City meant picking up the phone and calling Public Works Administrative Assistant Marge Bergman.

“Each phone call only takes a few minutes,” Bergman said. “However, the calls require gathering data from the caller and then entering it into the work order system.”

The City also previously had an online form that sent requests to staff as an email, though it still meant someone needed to re-enter the request into the system.

Edina To Go is integrated with the City’s existing asset management system, Cityworks, to allow for service requests to automatically be added to the work queue. The integration eliminates duplicative work for staff, streamlines the process and saves time and money.

“The integration will help staff so they don’t have to check two systems – Edina To Go and Cityworks,” said GIS Administrator Rebecca Foster, who oversees the City’s asset management software. “This really helps us out, with crews not needing to check multiple times if something is done.”

Edina To Go not only serves as a portal to report problems; it is also a one-stop place to find relevant information from the City.

“Where the City’s website is a great resource, especially for in-depth searches, Edina To Go serves as a good resource for frequently accessed information,” Gilgenbach said. “Things like the recycling pick-up schedule, elected officials and staff contact information, City Code, City news and more are quickly and easily accessible via the app.”

Since its launch, the app has been downloaded more than 1,300 times, allowing more than 400 requests to be made.

Edina To Go is available in the iTunes App Store and Android Google Play Store. For more information, contact Gilgenbach at jgilgenbach@EdinaMN.gov or visit www.EdinaMN.gov/edina-to-go.

Winter Parking Rules Keep Streets Easy To Drive

On average, the Twin Cities sees 54 inches of snow each winter, according to the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Climatic Data Center. Winter parking regulations help the Public Works Department keep roads safe and clear of snow during those winter months.

“We benefit greatly from the winter parking hours,” said Public Works Director Brian Olson. “They allow our Public Works crews to start plowing immediately when overnight snowfall occurs.”

Public Works employees take pride in clearing Edina’s streets of snow and ice. When cars obstruct the roadway, it takes more time to clear the road, and it cannot be cleared completely without towing them.

However, long before plows take to the road, Edina Police Officers patrol the area to keep plowing schedules on track. Police Chief Dave Nelson speaks highly of the officers’ ability to ensure vehicles are removed from streets before plows come through.

“Towing vehicles is the last thing we want to do, but we need to get the cars off the street after a snowfall of 1.5 inches or more,” Nelson said. “We do our best to get ahold of the vehicle owner before towing, but it does delay plowing schedules.”

Plow drivers do their best to plow around vehicles left on the street, but depending on the amount and nature of the snowfall, complications with visibility often occur. Additionally, vehicles left on the street may get blocked in due to the way plows push the snow. Because of these aspects, residents shouldn’t follow the ordinances just to ensure streets are plowed well, but also to protect their vehicles.

“Plow Drivers adjust their speed based on road conditions, but they still need inertia to move snow,” said Public Works Coordinator Dave Goergen. “[With poor visibility], they could easily hit vehicles on the street.”

According to local law, no vehicle may be parked on a street, highway or alley under these conditions:

- From 1 to 6 a.m. Nov. 1 through March 31, regardless of wintery conditions.
- When 1.5 inches or more of snow has fallen. Once streets and roadways have been plowed to the curb line, residents can then park vehicles on designated roadways.
- For six hours after a snowfall has ended, unless City traffic signs specifically allow vehicles to park on roadways.

For more information about winter parking ordinances, contact the Police Department at 952-826-1610.

Defend Against Invasive Species, Tree Disease Through Upkeep

By Chris Beeth

There are approximately 800 acres of woodlands within Edina's borders, nearly all of which contain some degree of buckthorn infestation. This much land requires extensive work to manage the invasive shrub, work which entails weeding the stubborn plant.

"Each time the existing shrubs are removed, the extensive viable seed bank will produce more plants that will also need to be removed," said City Forester Tom Horwath. "Successive control work over time will eventually allow the composition to resort back to desirable natives. But persistent labor is required to effect this change."

Horwath also works to control infectious tree diseases, an important task as anywhere from 200 to 700 trees are removed within Edina's borders annually due to diseases.

City residents are responsible for upkeep of vegetation, as well.

City Code mandates all streets and alleys must be clear of vegetation to a height of 16 feet above the curb or street edge and 8 feet above sidewalks, regardless of whether it's private or public property.

Abutting property owners are responsible for maintaining their boulevard or other trees to comply with this ordinance. Horwath is responsible for notifying residents when such trimming needs to be done.

Residents should follow these measures to ensure landscaping complies with local laws and remains healthy:

- 1) Trim trees and cut dead branches to support proper growth and prevent limbs from hanging over roads and sidewalks.
- 2) Consistently remove buckthorn from property. Buckthorn is invasive and threatens the health of nearby trees.

- 3) Treat ash trees on property as needed to prevent Emerald Ash Borer infestation.

Horwath recommends residents are proactive in cutting off lower branches of trees as they grow, known as "raising." January and February are great months to trim. Because trees are dormant, winter trimming leads to less stress and faster recovery of the tree.

Another step homeowners can take for horticultural protection is the implementation of chemical protection for ash trees. Chemical protection application must take place every one to three years to be effective.

The City offers a buckthorn abatement drop-off during the last two weekends of October from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays and noon to 4 p.m. Sundays. The site is located on Ikola Way, across from the Braemar Golf Dome.

The City has a list of qualified tree care professionals for those looking for assistance with tree maintenance. For more information or to request the list, contact Horwath at 952-826-0308 or thorwath@EdinaMN.gov.





City Uses Hydroseed To Restore Lawns

Have you ever noticed the blue/green fluff on the dirt after a construction project wraps up? The fluff is a mixture of grass seed and fertilizer called hydroseed that is used to restore lawns.

During a street reconstruction, lawns are often dug up within the right-of-way. Previously, the City used sod to restore lawns following street reconstruction projects. The City's Engineering Department found that, while attractive when first laid, the honeymoon period quickly ends. In 2013, the City switched to hydroseed, a proven performer in producing healthy lawns.

"Sod comes in grown under ideal conditions, so it looks good at first, but requires a lot of water and maintenance to get established and often dies quickly," said City Engineer Chad Millner. "It's not the most resilient turf material and is easily susceptible to heat and lack of moisture. Hydroseed, which is established under more natural conditions, has better long-term survival."

As an added benefit, hydroseed costs significantly less than sod, adding to overall project cost savings. On average, hydroseed costs about 75 percent less than sod.

Hydroseed is a mix of fertilizer, mulch and a seed mix specially mixed for our area. It is more resistant to pests and weeds as it is grown in place rather than transplanted. It also survives Minnesota's seemingly unpredictable weather better.

"Hydroseeding holds moisture well, helping the seed and root sprouts to grow," Millner said. Hydroseed is placed on loose soil, and the root penetrates and grows naturally. With sod, Millner said, "the turf is growing already, and root base needs to re-establish itself, which could take longer to happen."

Following a street reconstruction, the contractor maintains the hydroseed for 90 days after placement. The contractor will water, fertilize and mow the hydroseed, as needed, during that

time. At the end of the maintenance period, a final inspection is done, and areas that do not meet contract specifications will be re-hydroseeded. Once the hydroseeded area is given a passing grade, maintenance becomes the full responsibility of the homeowner.

For more information, visit www.EdinaMN.gov/Engineering or call 952-826-0371.

– Compiled by Jordan Gilgenbach

Good maintenance practices make for a good lawn in any circumstance. Follow these tips to maintain a hydroseeded lawn:

- Keep soil moist with light sprinkling in the morning, late afternoon or early evening.
- Continue watering even after the grass looks established.
- Fertilization requirements vary, depending on the time of year. Consult a reputable nursery or seed center for fertilizer specifications. Mow as soon as the grass blades are 3 to 4 inches high.
- Set the mower deck to the highest setting, and make sure the blades are sharp. Dull blades can bruise and damage new grass.
- Do not collect the clippings as this helps feed the soil and accelerates development.

Weeds will likely appear and are best controlled by growing good, healthy grass and following proper maintenance techniques.



Seven Join Public Works Department

By Chris Beeth

The City's Public Works Department has hired seven new staff members since the start of the year: Brandon Klatke, Derek Lustig, Carl Olson, Grant Sahr, Noah Silver, Steven Weiers and Yared Zewdie.

"The Department has been blessed to hire seven new, dedicated and hardworking employees within the last few months," said Public Works Director Brian Olson. "Noah Silver is a valuable asset as a leader for our Facilities division, Yared Zewdie has an incredible work ethic at the City Hall facility, Grant Sahr and Steven Weiers have almost 20 years of concrete experience between the two of them, Carl Olson and Derek Lustig have nearly 15 years of municipal or county street construction experience and Brandon Klatke returns after working seasonally for us a few years ago."

Silver – an Edina native – is one of the many new Public Works employees excited about his new role.

"The thought of coming back to this community was awesome. The City of Edina is a premiere city with a high standard for quality and service," said Silver, who began work in March. "I look forward to serving the City and all the people in it. Keeping the infrastructure up and running is very rewarding."

Silver serves as Electrical/HVAC Supervisor for the City, a job like other positions within the Public Works Departments that works to improve quality of life through maintaining and improving City infrastructure.

"I coordinate the electrical and HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning) needs for the City," said Silver. "As I continue to settle into my new position, I still look around in awe; the Public Works Department is a first-class operation. I truly believe the Department makes a significant difference in residents' quality of life."

Like Silver, Lustig expressed his excitement about joining the team. He serves as a Public Service Worker with the Asphalt Crew to provide a "solid future" for him and his family, as well as expand his knowledge of Public Works and work with asphalt.

"I enjoy the professionalism that is demonstrated by fellow employees," said Lustig. "Building new relationships and friendships with the people I've met has been my favorite part of the job."

Silver and Lustig are only two of the seven new additions to the Public Works Department.

Olson serves as a Public Service Worker on the asphalt crew, alongside Lustig. He began his career with Edina in February.

Sahr, who joined City staff in January, works in the Streets Division with the Concrete/Carpentry Crew, repairing concrete street panels, curb and gutter sections, sidewalks and driveway aprons.

“I really like the variety of tasks that the Department does,” said Sahr. “The crew brainstorms and works to come up with the most efficient and safe way to complete the task, all while maintaining the high standard of work that city residents expect and deserve.”

Klatke, who began work in April, serves as a Mechanic for the City. “I applied because the people at the City are fun to work with,” said Klatke. “The variety of work that I get to take part in while working for the City is great.”

Zewdie serves as Maintenance Technician, tasked with jobs like ordering supplies, light maintenance, custodial work and more for City Hall and the Public Works & Park Maintenance Facility.

“I liked the environment,” said Zewdie, who began work in March. “I look forward to learning new things and getting more experience.”

All seven of the new hires contribute to the Department in various ways, offering different attributes and skills to the City.

For more information, contact the Public Works Department at 952-826-0376.

Public Works Uses Stakes To Protect Property

By Chris Beeth

The City of Edina uses marking stakes to identify obstructions and reduce the chance of property damage by plows during winter months.

Marking stakes will be placed just before weather begins to hinder sight of potential obstructions.

The City will place stakes where crews feel they are needed. However, residents may submit a request for marking stakes to be placed on their properties, though the City will make the final decision on their placement. As the City works to improve roadways and reconstruct neighborhoods by installing curbs and gutters, fewer stakes will be used.

Public Works Director Brian Olson emphasized the City’s goal to put in as few stakes as possible, due to the many hours it

requires for installing hundreds of stakes, as well as taking them out in the spring.

“With more curb and gutter, it will greatly reduce the need for the use of marking stakes,” he said.

As the frost melts and ground softens in late March or early April, the stakes will be removed.

Unfortunately, even with stakes, damages occasionally occur. Residential properties have suffered damages due to weather and plowing conditions in the past. Stakes can be hard to identify after heavy snowfall.

To report property damage caused by a plow, contact the Public Works Streets Division through the City website at www.EdinaMN.gov/publicworks, use the “Edina To Go” mobile app or call 952-826-0376.



Edina Parks & Recreation First To Use Cutting-Edge Technology

By Krystal Caron

After an investment of \$37,500 and over a year of work, the City of Edina is the first in the nation to begin using GreenCityGIS, a tool that uses a geographic information system (GIS) to help manage park assets and better understand the users of those assets.

"I took this on as a project for our Department for a variety of reasons," said Parks & Recreation Director Ann Kattreh. "We were starting the strategic plan for the park system and I felt like a critical piece of that was an inventory of what we have in the parks."

Kattreh worked with Geographic Technologies Group (GTG) to pioneer GreenCityGIS. The tool is a catalog and three-dimensional model that includes nearly everything you see when you visit a park or facility, including park shelters, lights and light bulbs, irrigation, trees, bike racks, ball fields and

fences. In addition to the age, condition and size of each item, GreenCityGIS also provides a photo of the asset. The tool is also able to tell staff the number of acres that need to be mowed in a given week or where ash trees, vulnerable to Emerald Ash Borer, are within City parks.

"I am really excited about having an inventory of our assets at our fingertips at all times," said Kattreh. "So, if I want to go to Wooddale Park and see the age and the condition of that playground, I can do that. If we have athletic field lights that we need to change at Lewis Park, we can have information in this program to say this is the type of light it is, this is the kind of bulb it is and this is the last time that it was changed."

Edina and GTG are both very excited about the possibilities that this tool brings. GreenCityGIS is also integrated with the City's website and registration system. Patrons are able to search parks based on their amenities and see photos of the

facilities offered at each park. In addition, City staff will be able to map and better understand the patrons of the City's enterprise facilities and Parks & Recreation programming.

"The GIS industry has changed a lot in the last year or so, allowing departments like Parks & Recreation to take full advantage of geospatial technology," said GTG CEO and Owner David Holdstock. "Overnight, the Parks & Recreation Department is now incredibly advanced with regards to knowing everything about assets and on top of that they have access to where parks users are coming from."

Horticulturist Tim Zimmerman is most excited about the accessibility it will provide for park users. The tool will keep a complete inventory of each plant bed, so users will be able to see the flowers in bloom for each plant bed during each season.

"I think it will help with a lot of questions that are coming in [when people are planning an event at a City park]. They can look on the website and see the seasonal effect of the plants for that park," said Zimmerman.

Edina has several GIS tools already provided through the LOGIS (Local Government Information Systems Association) Consortium. LOGIS employs several GIS professionals to assist and support consortium member cities with GIS development, infrastructure, integration, data acquisition and maintenance, and training. However, City staff believe every department could benefit from additional GIS products.

"If every department had that kind of data, we can make more informed decisions and make those decisions more quickly," said Communications & Technology Services Director Jennifer Bennerotte, who explained that building permit data is a good example of an area that could be streamlined with the help of GIS. "Because we don't have our building permit information in a GIS type of system, when a reporter or someone requests [a map of tear-downs]



A screenshot of Centennial Lakes Park in GreenCityGIS, a tool the Parks & Recreation Department uses to help manage park assets.

someone here plots that on a map. They expect us to be able to produce that map with a few keystrokes, but we're actually painstakingly plotting a map."

Other cities nationwide are taking notice. Windsor, California, and locally, Inver Grove Heights have also begun work to implement GreenCityGIS.

"The Parks & Recreation Department and the City of Edina are leading the way for every other parks and recreation department in the nation," said Holdstock. "I'm excited about it and I think, without hesitation, I say this is how parks and recreation departments should function in the future."

For more information about Edina's GreenCityGIS, contact Kattreh at 952-826-0430 or akattreh@EdinaMN.gov.

Keep Sidewalks Clear During Winter Months



By Chris Beeth

The City plows roughly 55 of 77 miles of sidewalk within Edina, clearing snow for safe and efficient travel during the winter months. Property owners are tasked with removing the remaining snow from sidewalks that border their land.

Edina City Code states, “All snow and ice shall be removed from a sidewalk by the owner of the property adjoining the sidewalk within 48 hours of the cessation of the precipitation.”

“[The City] operates on a complaint basis, which is important when you talk about uniformity of enforcement,” said Public Works Director Brian Olson. “[The City] doesn’t want to create work for people, but at the same time, if nine out of 10 people shovel their sidewalk, but that 10th person doesn’t, it basically renders the sidewalk useless.”

Blocked paths can create problems for those navigating sidewalks.

“If residents don’t clear the snow from their sidewalks, pedestrians have difficulty walking through the snow – especially the elderly or disabled. With no other option, people are left to walk in the street, which is a dangerous choice,” said Transportation Planner Mark Nolan.

Streets Supervisor Shawn Anderson emphasized the importance of avoiding the danger of kids walking in busy streets because sidewalks are not clear. But, it’s not only younger residents who benefit from cleared sidewalks; emergency personnel, postal workers and delivery people count on sidewalks being clear and ice-free to do their jobs in a safe and effective manner.

The City may send a letter prompting snow removal if a sidewalk isn’t cleared by a property owner within 48 hours of a snowfall. The City will eventually clear the sidewalk and assess

the cost to the property owner in the event that snow is not removed in a timely matter.

State-funded sidewalks, due to higher amounts of traffic, are cleared by the City. These sidewalks include the ones bordering France Avenue and 50th Street; they are wider and more accessible for Public Works employees to maintain.

Residents are encouraged to reach out to and assist fellow neighbors, friends and family if they are unable to clear their own sidewalks.

“Neighbors helping neighbors is something we always encourage,” said Anderson.

As well as clearing sidewalks, residents are obligated to abide by City ordinances when hiring private contractors to handle their snow removal needs. Private plows must not deposit snow onto or across a roadway. Any snow that is removed from a sidewalk or driveway must remain on that property or be hauled away at the property owner’s expense.

Property owners will receive a warning letter for violations on the first offense. For a second offense, the City may issue the property owner a fine of up to \$700.

The City has a list of organizations and groups that provide snow removal services. One service the City recommends is the H.O.M.E Program (Household & Outside Maintenance For Elderly), a program that “mobilizes open-hearted people to bring you affordable home maintenance and chore services delivered by trusted professionals and community volunteers.”

For more information on the H.O.M.E. program, visit www.seniorcommunity.org or call 952-541-1019.

For more information on the Public Works Department’s removal of snow, contact Anderson at 952-826-0313.

Fire Department Asks Residents To Aid Firefighters By Adopting Hydrants

It takes exactly 20 turns with a two- or three-foot wrench to access any of the 1,876 fire hydrants in Edina, and it's important each and every one of them is accessible to responding firefighters hastily attempting to attach a hose to battle a fire.

During the winter months, snow-capped hydrants can hinder firefighters. Edina's Adopt-A-Hydrant program educates residents how to claim responsibility for the accessibility of a hydrant, benefitting firefighters who need to quickly access it in an emergency. Caring for the hydrant consists of keeping it clear of snow after snowfalls.

"The biggest thing we would like is to have residents keep hydrants clear for emergency use," said Public Works Coordinator Dave Goergen. "There are over 1,800 hydrants in the city, and there is no way in terms of manpower we can undergo this on our own."

Residents can sign up at www.EdinaMN.gov/adopt-a-hydrant to receive email reminders after large snowstorms to shovel out a hydrant in their neighborhood.

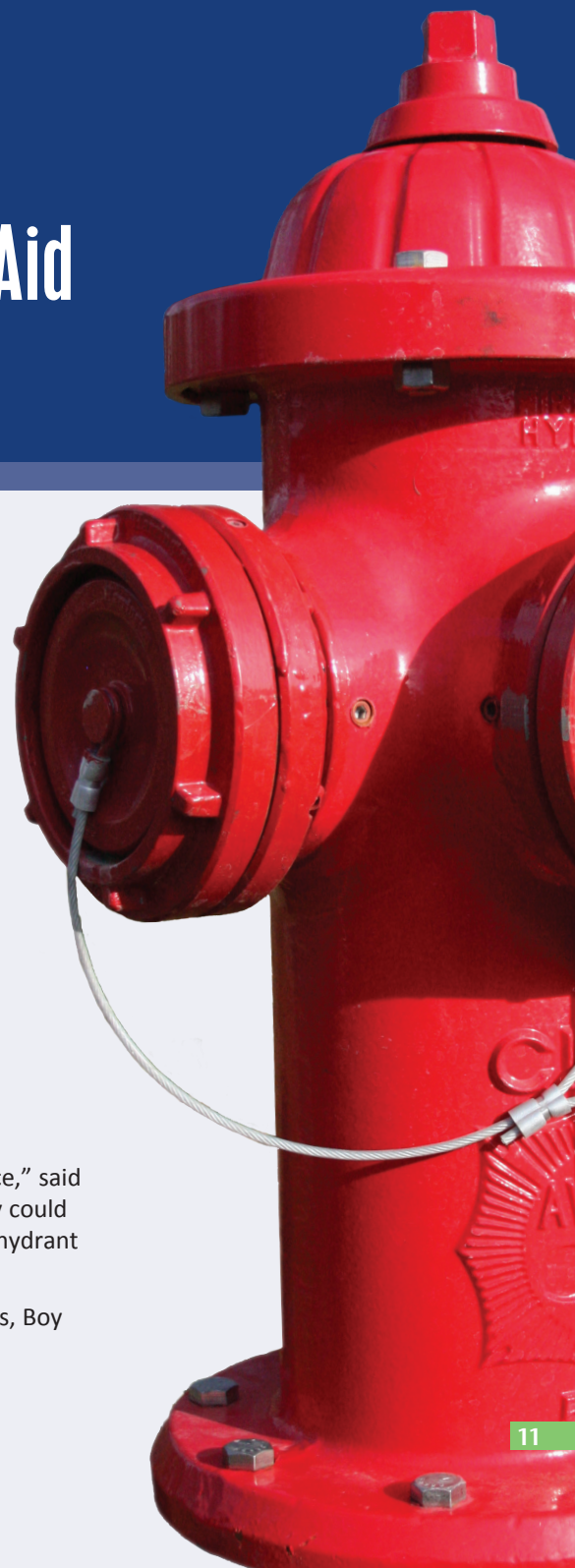
Fire Code requires a clear three-foot radius around a fire hydrant, allowing responders to easily approach the critical resource in an emergency.

Fire Marshal Jeff Siems emphasizes the importance of keeping hydrants clear.

"It is essential for our firefighters to quickly locate nearby hydrants; it's a crucial resource," said Siems. "When residents adopt a hydrant, they aren't just taking care of a hydrant – they could be saving a life. And it's because of the valuable time they are saving by having the fire hydrant ready for firefighters when they arrive."

In addition to individual residents, many community organizations such as church groups, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, service clubs and athletic teams adopt hydrants.

For more information, call the Edina Fire Department at 952-826-0330.



Edina Provides Multiple Winter Skating Options



Edina's 12 outdoor ice rinks are maintained daily and open from Dec. 15 to Feb. 28, depending on the weather.

In addition to the park rinks, the City also has a 10-acre rink at Centennial Lakes Park and a new outdoor ice rink at Braemar Arena. The Centennial Lakes Park rink will be open, weather permitting, Dec. 18, and remain open until mid-February or later. The park offers skate rental, concessions and a rink-side warming house.

"It's a wonderful family-friendly venue to allow everyone to experience all the excellent activities a Minnesota winter has to offer," said Centennial Lakes Park Assistant Manager Laura Knollmaier. More than 60,000 people visit the park to ice skate every winter, she said.

The Backyard Rink at Braemar Arena is a refrigerated, regulation-size rink. It is expected to open Nov. 1 and remain open through the end of March. Refrigeration allows staff to open the rink earlier in the season and keep it open longer in the spring.

"It was really fun to watch hockey players skating with just shoulder pads in the 50s and 60s as the weather got warmer," said Susie Miller, General Manager of Braemar Arena and Braemar Field. "We encourage people to come and skate during open skating on Friday nights. It's a really fun experience."

There is open skating at the Backyard Rink 8 to 9:30 p.m. Fridays, as well as some select daytime open skating hours during the week. Special events and leagues are also being organized, so Boettcher encourages skaters to keep an eye out for details on the website www.BraemarArena.com.

For more information on the Backyard Rink, call 952-833-9500.

To learn more about skating at Centennial Lakes Park, visit www.CentennialLakesPark.com or call 952-833-9580.

For additional information about the 12 park rinks located throughout Edina, visit www.EdinaParks.com or call 952-826-0367.

— Compiled by Jordan Gilgenbach

Outdoor enthusiasts are encouraged to get outside this winter and skate at any of the 12 ice skating rinks at parks around Edina, as well as Braemar Arena's Backyard Rink and Centennial Lakes Park.

"The City provides a lot of opportunity to skate in your neighborhood so you don't have to travel far to skate," said Recreation Supervisor Eric Boettcher. "To get the rinks up and going, first we need Mother Nature to cooperate and for the ground to freeze. We start trying to flood rinks as soon as it is cold enough."

A dozen general ice skating rinks are located at parks throughout Edina. Skaters can find the rinks at Arden, Cornelia School, Countryside, Creek Valley, Highlands, Lewis, Normandale, Pamela, Strachauer, Todd, Walnut Ridge and Weber parks. Edina is one of a few cities that is able to offer warming houses, open skating and hockey rinks at all locations. Boards are set up at parks that don't have permanent skating rinks. The rinks are groomed daily by staff during the season.

It takes the Park Maintenance Division of the Public Works Department a week or two to build ice at the outdoor rinks in the parks once the ground freezes.

"Staff floods the rinks daily to make sure the ice is in good shape," said Boettcher of the ice-making process once the season begins. "It helps build up ice, too, so if it does get warm, we can continue to sustain ice."

"We have three guys that go out and sweep the rinks every day around 3 or 4 a.m. We try to plow the snow and heavy shavings off and shovel around the boards," said Public Service Worker Bill Hanly. "Then, we put more water down – about three to five thin layers, which ends up being about a foot thick by the end of the season."

The Parks & Recreation Department plans to open the rinks Dec. 15, and keep them open through Feb. 28, weather permitting. The outdoor rinks will be open 4 to 9:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. Saturdays and 1 to 8 p.m. Sundays throughout the season. Holiday hours will be posted at www.EdinaParks.com.

"It's rewarding to go out and do this when we see the skate marks on the rinks and see people use the rinks," Hanly said.